

CLAIMS:

1. A structured cabling system comprising at least two patch panels each having a plurality of jacks, an indicator means associated with each jack, each said indicator means being operable by an applied signal to provide a signal which identifies the jack associated with that indicator means, and sensor means associated with each jack to provide an indication of the presence or absence of a plug connected to the jack.
2. A structured cabling system according to claim 1, wherein said sensor means provides an electrical indication of the presence or absence of a plug connected to the associated jack.
3. A structured cabling system according to claim 2, wherein said sensor means comprises at least two contacts provided in the jack which, in use, are bridged by a contact provided on the plug when it is connected to the jack so as to complete an electrical circuit.
4. A structured cabling system according to claim 3, wherein said jack is a split can having two parts which are electrically isolated from each other, the contact provided on the plug electrically contacting said two parts upon insertion of the plug into the jack so as to electrically connect said two parts and thereby complete a detector circuit connected to said two parts of the can.
5. A structured cabling system according to any of the preceding claims, wherein said indicator means provides a visual signal which identifies the jack associated therewith.
6. A structured cabling system according to claim 5, wherein the indicator means is a light source, preferably a light emitting diode.

7. A structured cabling system according to any of the preceding claims, further including continuity checking means associated with each jack, which, in use, operates to confirm full connection between a jack in one patch panel and its associated jack in the other patch panel.

8. A structured cabling system according to any of the preceding claims, further including processor means operable to provide a said applied signal said indicator means in a sequence so as to identify the patching sequence for effecting connections between the two patch panels.

9. A structured cabling system according to claim 8, wherein said processor means actuates said indicator means in a sequence which identifies pairs of jacks into which, in use, opposing ends of a patch lead should be connected.

10. A structured cabling system according to claim 8 or claim 9, wherein said processor means actuates indicator means alternately on said first patch panel and said second patch panel so as to identify, in sequence, a jack on the first patch panel followed by its associated jack on the second patch panel.

11. A structured cabling system according to any of claims 8 to 10, wherein said indicator means are operable only one at a time, and said processor means is connected to said sensor means, each said indicator means being operated until said sensor means of the associated jack is triggered, at which time the next indicator means in the sequence is operated.

12. A method of providing connection between a plurality of jacks provided on at least two patch panels, comprising the steps of providing a plurality indicator means, each said indicator means being associated with a single jack of one of said patch panels so as to identify said associated jack, and actuating each indicator means in a

sequence which identifies pairs of jacks into which the two ends of a patch lead are to be connected in order to effect a connection between said first and second jacks.

13. A method according to claim 12, wherein said indicator means are actuated to identify one pair of a jacks at a time.

14. A method according to claim 12 or claim 13, wherein said indicator means are actuated one at a time so as to identify a single jack at a time, the indicator means of pair jacks being actuated one after the other.

15. A method according to any of claims 12 to 14, comprising the further step of detecting the presence or absence of plug connected to each jack.

16. A method according to claim 15, comprising the further step of creating a record of the insertion and/or removal of a plug from a jack.

17. A method according to claim 15 or claim 16, wherein each indicator means remains actuated for a predefined period of time, following which the next indicator means in the sequence is actuated.

18. A method according to any of claims 15 to 17, comprising the further step of carrying out a continuity check between each pair of jacks when a plug has been detected as being connected to each jack of the pair.

19. A method according to claim 18, comprising the further step of creating a record of the results of the continuity checks carried out on the pairs of jacks.

20. A method according to claim 18 or claim 19, wherein the sequence does not proceed to the next pair of jacks in the sequence until the continuity check confirms

continuity between the two jacks of the current pair.

21. A method according to claim 18 or claim 19, wherein each indicator means is actuated for a predefined period of time, after which the system times out and provides a time-out warning whilst proceeding to the actuate the next indicator means in the sequence,

22. A method according to any of claims 18 to 21, comprising the further step of provide an alarm signal to an operator in the event of a plug being detected in each jack of a pair and the continuity check between said paired jacks failing.

23. A method according to any of claims 12 to 22, comprising the further step of programming processor means with an actuation sequence for the indicator means, connecting the processor means to a structured cabling system according to any of claims 1 to 11, and operating said processor means to run said sequence.

24. A method according to claim 23 when dependent on claim 16 and/or claim 19, comprising the further step of using said processor means to create the or each record and validating the or each record with the actuation sequence of the processor means to confirm the patching operation has been carried out correctly.

25. A method according to any of claims 12 to 24, wherein each said indicator means can be actuated to indicate that a plug connected to a jack should be removed.

26. A jack for a structured cabling system according to any of claims 1 to 12, comprising a body having a plurality of contacts therein and two partial shielding cans which are electrically isolated from each other, said cans, in use, being engaged by at least one contact formed on a plug which mates with said body in order to effect an electrical connection between said cans.